

CHARLES COUNTY - Congressman Steny Hoyer today joined Lee Kingham, Executive Director of the Epilepsy Foundation of the Chesapeake Region and Abilities Network and Travis Nichols, Program Director for Charles County to participate in a ribbon cutting ceremony for the Epilepsy Foundation of the Chesapeake Region and the Abilities Network's new regional Southern Maryland office in La Plata. The Epilepsy Foundation of the Chesapeake Region is the local Epilepsy Foundation affiliate, which serves Maryland and Northern Virginia. Their sister organization, Abilities Network, provides developmental disabilities services for children and adults.

While these two sister organizations have had programs partnering with the school system and the local community in Charles County for some time, this is their first regional office in Southern Maryland.

"The opening of this office marks an important moment for Charles County and Southern Maryland families," said Congressman Hoyer. "These two fine organizations, the Epilepsy Foundation of the Chesapeake, and the Abilities Network, have long served the state of Maryland by providing critical support and services for children and adults with developmental disabilities and special needs. Now, with the establishment of this regional office, Abilities Network and the Epilepsy Foundation can better meet the needs of the consumers in this part of the state.

"I know that, working with the Abilities Network, this regional office will serve a broader population of individuals and families with a wide range of developmental disabilities and special needs. I truly appreciate every member of this staff for your dedication to improving the lives of people with disabilities.

"A family with a child with a developmental disability often just needs to know where they can go to get a special service they require, or a certain resource, or need a place to receive some specialized training. That is when Abilities Network and the Epilepsy Foundation steps in, and provides that much-needed bridge to the members of this community.

"I know many of you are already working to meet the needs of the families in this area, but with a regional office I believe you can do so much more. Now, with a visible presence in Charles County, the families in this community know that, not only are you available to serve their needs, but you are invested in the long-term success of this community, and for that I thank you deeply," Hoyer concluded.

As a senior member of the House committee that funds the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Congressman Hoyer has worked to establish and increase funding for epilepsy programs and is a champion for disability issues generally. In addition, in 2003, he secured funds to help the Epilepsy Foundation raise awareness about how to treat and prevent seizures.

Congressman Hoyer also shepherded the Americans With Disabilities Act to overwhelming approval in 1990. This landmark civil rights legislation has helped millions of disabled Americans enter the workforce, achieve independence and go as far as their talents take them.

Last year, Congress worked with the Epilepsy Foundation to, for the first time, establish November as National Epilepsy Awareness Month.

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